

the Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office (see ADDRESSES section).

Author: The primary author of this document is Douglas Krofta, biologist, Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (see ADDRESSES section).

Authority

The authority for this action is the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

Dated: April 13, 1999.

Jamie Rappaport Clark,

Director, Fish and Wildlife Service.

[FR Doc. 99-9783 Filed 4-15-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Parts 600 and 648

[I.D. 040999B]

Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; General Provisions for Domestic Fisheries; Applications for Experimental Fishing Permits

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notification of experimental fishery proposal; request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces that the Regional Administrator, Northeast Region, NMFS, is considering approval of an experimental fishing proposal that would permit vessels to conduct operations otherwise restricted by regulations governing the Fisheries of the Northeastern United States, 50 CFR part 648. The experimental fishery would involve fishing for, retention, and landing of Atlantic sea scallops with modified dredge gear in the Georges Bank and Nantucket Lightship Closed Areas. Regulations implementing the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act provisions require publication of this notification to provide interested parties the opportunity to comment on the proposed experimental fishery.

DATES: Comments on this document must be received by May 4, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be sent to Jon Rittgers, Acting Regional Administrator, NMFS, Northeast Regional Office, 1 Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930. Mark on the outside of the envelope: "Comments on Proposed Scallop Experimental Fishery."

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: David Gouveia, Fishery Management Specialist, 978-281-9280.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The NMFS Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) submitted an application on April 12, 1999, to map the distribution and estimate the abundance of Atlantic sea scallops, and to determine the rate and distribution of finfish and invertebrate bycatches to sea scallop dredges in portions of the Georges Bank and Nantucket Lightship Closed Areas. The proposed experimental fishery would also provide information on the potential habitat effects of the use of scallop fishing gear in these areas and test new gear designs to reduce finfish bycatch rates.

The NEFSC would conduct experimental fishing activities with three commercial vessels federally permitted with a limited access Atlantic sea scallop permit. Vessels interested in participating in this experiment would be chosen by a lottery system administered by the NMFS Northeast Regional Office. Exempted fishing permits would be issued to the participating vessels to exempt them from closed areas and gear restrictions contained in the regulations implementing the Northeast Multispecies and Atlantic Sea Scallop Fishery Management Plans.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: April 13, 1999.

Gary C. Matlock,

Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 648

[Docket No. 990226056-9056-01; I.D. 122498C]

RIN 0638-AL31

Northeast Multispecies Fishery; Amendment 9 to the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan; Supplement to the Proposed Rule

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Supplement to the proposed rule.

SUMMARY: NMFS issues this supplement to the proposed rule for Amendment 9 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Northeast Multispecies Fishery. The supplement is intended to provide information inadvertently omitted from the summary of the initial regulatory flexibility analysis (IRFA) prepared for Amendment 9 published with the proposed rule. Specifically, this supplement summarizes information about alternatives that the New England Fishery Management Council (Council) considered, but rejected, for the Amendment.

DATES: Public comments will be accepted from April 14, 1999 through May 3, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be sent to Jon C. Rittgers, Acting Regional Administrator, NMFS, Northeast Regional Office, One Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930. Mark the outside of the envelope, "Comments on the initial regulatory flexibility analysis of Amendment 9."

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Susan A. Murphy, Fishery Policy Analyst, 978-281-9252.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Analytical documents in Amendment 9 pertaining to requirements of the Regulatory Flexibility Act include "Volume I," October 9, 1998; "Supplement," November 14, 1998; and "Supplement," January 27, 1999. This supplement to the proposed rule for Amendment 9 republishes, for the convenience of the public, the portion of the classification section of that proposed rule (64 FR 13952; March 23, 1999) that addressed the Regulatory Flexibility Act and adds information inadvertently omitted from that classification section relevant to alternatives considered, but rejected, by the Council for Amendment 9.

Classification

NMFS prepared an IRFA for this proposed rule, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 603, without regard to whether the proposal would have a significant impact on a substantial number of small entities. Measures analyzed in the IRFA include the brush-sweep trawl gear prohibition, the one-fish halibut possession limit, and the winter flounder fish size increase. The following is a brief discussion of the measures analyzed in the IRFA.

Amendment 9 proposes the prohibition of brush-sweep trawl gear on vessels fishing for multispecies. The cost of the brush-sweep trawl gear is estimated to be between \$8,000 and \$15,000, depending on the individual vessel. Excessive wear and tear on the gear requires that the gear be replaced